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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8020th meeting of the Security Council, held on 9 August 2017, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern about the unprecedented level of global humanitarian needs and the threat of famine presently facing more than 20 million people in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria, and notes with appreciation the Secretary-General's leadership in the efforts to respond.

"The Security Council notes the devastating impact on civilians of ongoing armed conflict and violence. The Security Council also emphasises with deep concern that ongoing conflicts and violence have devastating humanitarian consequences and hinder an effective humanitarian response in the short, medium and long term and are therefore a major cause of famine in the situations above. In this regard, the Security Council also notes the links between food scarcity and increased vulnerability of women, children and persons with disabilities.

"The Security Council reiterates its commitment to work with the Secretary-General to pursue all possible avenues to end conflicts, including through addressing their underlying root causes in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

"The Security Council stresses that responding effectively to these crises requires respect for international humanitarian law by all parties.

"The Security Council underlines the obligations of all parties to armed conflict to respect and protect civilians. The Security Council encourages those with influence over parties to armed conflict to remind the latter of their obligation to comply with international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council further underlines the need to ensure the security of humanitarian operations and personnel in conflict-affected countries. The Security Council calls on all parties to respect and protect medical facilities and personnel and their means of transport and equipment.

"The Security Council deplores that in the conflict-affected Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria, certain parties have failed to ensure unfettered and sustained access for deliveries of vital food assistance as well as other forms of humanitarian aid. The Security Council reiterates its

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calls on all parties to allow the safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to all areas and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies into each country, and their distribution throughout. The Security Council further urges all parties to protect civilian infrastructure which is critical to the delivery of humanitarian aid in the affected countries.

"The Security Council calls upon all parties in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria to urgently take steps that would enable a more effective humanitarian response.

"The Security Council commends efforts by international donors to provide humanitarian assistance in response to these four crises. The Security Council calls for the immediate disbursement of the funds already pledged to Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria at successive international conferences, including those held in Oslo, Geneva and London, if possible in the form of multi-year and unearmarked funding. The Security Council calls on Member States to provide additional resources and funding to pull people back from the brink of famine.

"The Security Council stresses the need to enhance longer-term recovery and resilience of conflict-affected countries.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide information on the humanitarian situation and response, including on the risk of famine, in the conflict-affected Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria, as part of his regular comprehensive reporting.

"In light of the unprecedented threat of famine in conflict-affected Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria, the Security Council further requests the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing, during the month of October 2017, on country-specific impediments to an effective response to the risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria and make specific recommendations on how to address these impediments, in order to enable a more robust short- and long-term response in the four countries. The Security Council welcomes the Secretary-General's letters on the risk of famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria of 21 February and 27 June 2017 and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to provide early warning when a conflict having devastating humanitarian consequences and hindering an effective humanitarian response risks leading to an outbreak of famine.

"The Security Council expresses its readiness to continue to support the Secretary-General's call to action to avert famine in conflict-affected countries and commits to engage constructively on the Secretary-General's specific recommendations."